



TOWN OF LOS GATOS RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS
FOR ALL SINGLE FAMILY AND TWO-FAMILY DWELLINGS
IN ALL ZONES EXCEPT THE RESOURCE CONSERVATION
AND HILLSIDE RESIDENTIAL ZONES

INTENT

These development standards shall be used in conjunction with the Architecture and Site Approval process as set forth in Section 29.20.140 et seq of the Town Code. The standards are designed to compliment the regulations established in Article IV, Divisions 1, 2, 3, and 4, Chapter 29 and Section 29.40.750 and 29.20.150 of the Town Code. The standards shall be used by the Planning Commission when considering applications for Architecture and Site Approval. The standards shall also be used by the Planning Director when reviewing plans to add a new second story, second story additions exceeding 100 sq. ft. or the demolition of a portion of a building with a nonconforming setback, demolitions, replacement structures, and significant remodels.

OBJECTIVES

To establish standards for use by the Planning Commission, Town Council, Planning Director and property owners that provide for the health, safety, welfare and environmental quality of residential neighborhoods.

To provide property owners with specific standards that may be used by architects and engineers to prepare plans for consideration by the Town.

To preserve and protect the architectural heritage and streetscapes of the Town. To ensure provision of light and air to the inhabitants of all single family and two family dwellings and provide a reasonable level of compatibility in the scale of structures.

HISTORIC DESIGNATIONS

Any project affecting a residence that is historically designated or is located in a historic district must be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Committee prior to Planning Commission consideration if review is required by the designating ordinance. The project shall be reviewed for compliance with Article VIII, Division 3, Chapter 29 of the Town Code, the historic designation or historic district ordinance and these standards.

If a structure is considered to be a contributor to a historic district, any additions shall be appropriately planned so as to not adversely affect the architectural design or historic integrity of the structure.

Adopted by resolution 1989-55, Town Council 4/24/89

Amended by resolution 1991-118

Amended by resolution 1998-7, Town Council 1/20/98

CONDITION OF EXISTING RESIDENCE

When an existing residence is proposed to be demolished, the condition of the structure will be taken into consideration. Town records will be used to determine the condition of the structure whenever possible. In addition, a detailed report shall be prepared by an architect, registered structural engineer, or registered civil engineer under contract with the Town at the applicant's expense. The report shall address all aspects of the structures physical condition (e.g., foundation, plumbing, electrical, etc.).

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

I. SITE DEVELOPMENT

A. GENERAL

- (1) The Planning Commission/Planning Director shall assess the project's overall effect and compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood. Does the size, height, style or color conflict with other structures in the neighborhood? The appearance of the residence should blend with the character of the neighborhood and conform with the existing streetscape.
- (2) The design will be evaluated for its contribution to the Town's unique character and to the Town's beauty and openness, and on its suitability for its location. Stock building plans may not be acceptable, due to the lot configuration and topography.
- (3) Residential structures that have historic value by virtue of architectural character and historic association shall be protected. For example, the design of the project must have respect for the style of the historic structure and the surrounding neighborhood, especially its relationship to the pattern of existing development (streetscape).
- (4) The project should not impair - directly or by the possible total effect of several new residences - the use, enjoyment, and value of neighboring public and private property.
- (5) The location of driveways and parking areas shall be designed to avoid impacts on adjacent properties and the natural environment.
- (6) The design of the proposed residence or addition should complement the site. For example, are interior spaces oriented to take advantage of outward views, and are there usable outdoor play areas for children? Are natural topography and trees retained?
- (7) The design of a proposed addition shall complement the existing residence.

B. SITE PLANNING

(1) Site Design:

A project should be designed to fit a site's natural conditions, rather than alter the site to accommodate a stock building plan. Existing topography should be preserved. The Town will consider proposals to make minor modification to existing topography where it contributes to good appearance or, where necessary, to correct unacceptable construction conditions (grading, drainage, etc.). Natural grade and vegetation should be retained to the maximum extent practicable. Excessive cuts and fills must be avoided. Unretained cuts or fills will not be allowed. The site layout should take into consideration the project's effect on adjacent properties and neighborhoods (e.g., views, privacy, setbacks, etc.).

For residential projects which require zoning approval, if a slope is greater than 10%, then the net lot area shall be reduced according to the following standard:

<u>Average lot slope</u>	<u>Percent of net site area to be deducted</u>
10.01 - 20%	10% plus 2% for each 1% of slope over 10%
20.01 - 30%	30% plus 3% for each 1% of slope over 20%
Over 30%	60%

The net site area after this deduction is calculated shall be used to calculate the FAR for the site. A perspective drawing showing the project, hillside, and adjacent homes is required. The perspective drawing shall demonstrate the scale, mass and fit of the house with the existing slope.

(2) Solar Orientation:

The project shall be designed to the maximum extent possible, for passive or natural heating and/or cooling. One example of passive or natural heating opportunities in the project design is the design and orientation of a residence in an east/west alignment for southern exposure. Another example is to design and orient the structure to take advantage of shade or prevailing breezes. Existing trees should not be removed solely to provide solar access.

(3) Shadow Effect:

All applications shall, in addition to other required materials, provide a plan showing all structures and other important features on adjacent properties and the winter/summer shadow lines at 9:00 a.m., noon and 3:00 p.m. that will result from the proposed project. The plan shall also indicate height and number of stories of the adjacent structures.

(4) Easement/Dedications:

Project plans shall show all existing easements and required dedications. Structures shall not be located across and shall not project into any existing or proposed easements. The Engineering Department should be contacted by the project applicant to determine if new dedications and/or easements are required.

II. BUILDING DESIGN

A. HARMONY/COMPATIBILITY

The proposed project must have a harmonious and compatible relationship with the surrounding neighborhood. The factors which contribute to the relationship include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) an appropriate design theme;
- (2) an appropriate sense of scale;
- (3) a compatible roof line;
- (4) colors, exterior materials and details;
- (5) lot coverage/setbacks which complement adjacent structures and uses.

In order for the Planning Commission/Planning Director to fully analyze factors 1) through 3), all applications shall be accompanied by a streetscape of the project vicinity both in elevation and plan view with the proposed structure superimposed. The plan view shall indicate the number of stories and approximate height of the surrounding structures. The streetscape shall include both sides of the street. All applications that require Planning Commission approval shall include photographs of the subject site and neighboring properties on both sides of the street. Both the streetscape and the photographs shall include a sufficient number of homes to provide the Commission/Director with a thorough impression of the neighborhood. Examples of items to be considered are:

- (1) the design of the elevation facing an adjacent structure as well as a public street;
- (2) accessory structures, parking areas, decks, trash collection areas and other utilitarian areas should be located in a manner that is sensitive to adjacent structures;
- (3) compatibility of the structure with the existing neighborhood.

B. SCALE AND MASS

Architectural features such as eave lines, roof forms, dormers, bays, chimneys, detailing, building facade articulation and footprint shall be effectively utilized to maintain a scale consistent with neighboring structures. Large undifferentiated wall planes on the street elevation will not be allowed.

(1) Second-Story Additions and Two-Story Dwellings

The Town has identified a trend towards the development of two-story houses and second-story additions in the Los Gatos residential community. One of the unique traits of Los Gatos is the variety of house sizes, shapes and designs especially in the R-1 and R-1:D zones.

While there are many creative second-story designs, the Town is concerned that property owners and developers are restricting their design alternatives to only second story. A continuation of this trend could jeopardize the character of our neighborhoods.

To maintain a proportionate distribution of single-story and two-story housing stock in Los Gatos, property owners and designers are encouraged to strongly consider single-story designs as viable development alternatives. If a second-story design is chosen, the applicants shall be required to explain why a single-story design does not work.

Many of our smaller houses on lots less than 5,000 square feet represent the Town's affordable housing stock. Significant additions to these homes not only can overwhelm the site, it can diminish the affordability of the property without contributing positively to the neighborhood streetscape.

Second-story additions on lots smaller than 5,000 square feet may be inappropriate and may not be approved due to lot constraints, lack of open space or on-site parking, or due to mass and scale. Additionally, two-story designs that cast shadows on the yards of adjacent properties or infringe on a neighbor's privacy may not be approved.

(2) Demolitions, Replacement Structures, and Significant Remodels

The Town is experiencing an increase in the number of applications for demolitions and large-scale remodels of existing homes in many neighborhoods. In an effort to ensure that homes are not arbitrarily demolished and to preserve the character of existing neighborhoods, the Town has recently updated the zoning regulations related to the process involved in demolitions. (See chapter 29 of the Town Code).

Significant remodeling of homes that will change the character of the neighborhood, result in a dramatically altered streetscape, or bear no reflection on the original home will require extra scrutiny of design.

When a house is demolished pursuant to section 29.10.020 of the Town Code, the replacement structure shall be judged for compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood based upon the following criteria:

- 1) Predominant architectural style of street/neighborhood
- 2) Lot size
- 3) Size of homes on the street on which the subject property is located
- 4) Neighborhood in transition
- 5) Impact on site characteristics and surrounding homes, i.e., privacy, shadowing effect and existing vegetation

C. EXTERIOR MATERIALS AND COLORS

Where the exterior materials are deemed to be an essential element of an existing home, the new materials should match those of the existing structure. Special consideration shall be given to the exterior materials of historic structures to ensure that the proposed materials are characteristic of the architectural style and/or match those of the existing structure. All plans shall indicate the proposed color scheme. Although the selection of exterior paint color(s) is a personal decision, the color(s) should be restrained -- not harsh or garish -- and should complement the streetscape.

D. BUILDING COMPONENTS

Building components such as windows, doors, eaves and parapets should be arranged and detailed to create a united architectural composition appropriate to the character of the neighborhood.

E. ENERGY CONSERVATION

A project should be designed to minimize mechanical heating and cooling. Sunlight should be used for direct heating and illumination whenever possible. Natural ventilation and shading should be used to cool the interior of the house.

F. PRIVACY

All new construction shall be designed to minimize views into the windows of adjacent structures and outdoor recreation areas by carefully selecting the location of windows or through the use of louvers or frosted glass. This design standard is not intended to prohibit two-story structures.

III. LANDSCAPING/OPEN SPACE

A. GENERAL

Existing trees shall be preserved to the maximum extent possible in accordance with Section 29.10.0965 of the Town Code. All proposed landscaping shall comply with the Town's Landscaping Policies for Applications for Zoning and Subdivision Approvals as set forth by Resolution.

B. PRIVATE OPEN SPACE

(1) General:

Each one or two (2) bedroom dwelling shall provide a minimum of 500 square feet of private open space. The open space shall be proportional to the number of bedrooms in the dwelling. For each additional bedroom in excess of two (2) bedrooms, the open space area shall be increased by 100 square feet. (Example: A four (4) bedroom dwelling shall provide 700 square feet of open space area). The open space provided shall be exclusive of the required yard areas (except for the required rear yard).

(2) Screening:

Screening of the patio and outdoor activity areas shall be reviewed for its compatibility with fencing and landscaping requirements.

IV. MODIFICATION OF DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

These development standards are established as guidelines which reflect current Town policy for community design. In the event a project might be adversely affected by these standards, the applicant may present a written request for modification through the Architecture and Site Approval process. If the Planning Commission deems the requested modification worthy of favorable consideration, the modification may be allowed provided that findings are made that such modification will not be detrimental to the health, safety, general welfare and quality of life of the project residents and of the surrounding neighborhood. If the modification is not allowed by the Planning Commission, the applicant may appeal to the Town Council. No modification of these development standards may be considered without a public hearing.